



How to ...

Deliver great school assemblies

The purpose of taking an assembly

Assemblies are a great way of connecting church and school; they provide a platform for us to make a good impression to both children and members of staff. If an assembly is done well it can further the opportunities for us to contribute into other areas of school life.

What we must understand is that a school assembly is not the context to convert but it is place for the pupils to reflect, explore and engage.

Yes, we want to share our values and our beliefs but in the context of enabling pupils to think about theirs.

A few starting points

- **Who is the assembly aimed for?**

Is the assembly aimed at the whole school, Key stages (Infant/Junior), a year group or a class? The broader the age range, the more careful you will have to be when planning content that will suit everyone present.

- **What time of day is it?**

Is the assembly at the beginning of a school day, before break time, after lunch or at the end of a school day? Depending on when the assembly takes place could determine whether the pupils are lively/restless etc.

- **How long is the assembly?**

Secondary school assemblies tend to be shorter, perhaps 5 – 10 minutes. Primary school assemblies tend to be lengthier and more relaxed, perhaps 10 – 20 minutes. Having longer helps to develop a theme but also brings the challenge of keeping attention and involvement from the pupils

- **Where will the assembly be?**

The school hall is the most common place for an assembly but you'll need to check. Be aware that at certain times throughout the school year the hall can be in use for other activities or there might be space restrictions due to stages being erected for productions.

Planning your content

Visual illustrations - What will the children see as they listen to you?

- You. Move around and keep good eye contact to keep the children engaged
- A few props set out on the floor/table or stage
(These need to be in good view to those pupils at the front and at the back)
- A prop/ picture or illustration to hold
- A picture up on the screen using a projector
- A film clip

Participation - How can you involve the pupils?

- Asking a question the pupils can think about
- Encouraging children to take part in a suitable game/starter (attention grabber)
- Instant reaction – getting pupils to respond to an idea or question immediately
- Bible stories – Narrating/drama/crowd participation
- Action songs (These work really well in primary schools)

Reflection

- Always allow time and space for the pupils to reflect on what they have seen and heard and apply it to their own lives and experiences. This could be facilitated with a time of quiet, a question posed, some music playing or a slideshow of pictures or questions.

The reality of taking school assemblies

You've done the planning, you've arrived in plenty of time and now it's time for the assembly to start but... expect the unexpected, things can change so you need to be flexible. Assemblies are prone to interruptions or unexpected events so you will need to be ready to adapt. For example:

- Reduced time – What can you drop from your assembly?
- Negative atmosphere/disruptions – How do you create a good atmosphere?
- Losing your train of thought – How do you cope? How do you carry on?
- Technical difficulties – Have you got a backup plan?

Some do's

- Do arrive early – Not on time
- Do smile, make good eye contact and speak clearly, projecting your voice (even if you don't feel confident, speak confidently)
- Do move around – you are a visual aid for the pupils
- Do be enthusiastic about your faith – If we're not, why should we expect others to be
- Do be inclusive to all pupils and be positive to all pupils – applause pupils who take part and praise good behaviour
- Do have fun!

Some don'ts

- Don't go over time
- Don't be negative or humiliate children
- Don't hype the children up if you cannot regain order
- Don't use language that the children will not understand
- Don't preach!

Songs

Make sure you know the song you are introducing, have fun when singing it and try to do the same song a few times so the children get to know it really well. However, choose your songs carefully so that the words are appropriate and aren't songs of declaration which could conflict with some children's beliefs.

DVD clips

Make sure your DVD clip is age appropriate to all in the assembly. Is it suitable for both reception children and year 6 children? Can it be seen? Can it be heard?

Useful Links

Open the Book

<http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book/>

Schoolswork.co.uk

<https://www.schoolswork.co.uk/>

assemblies.co.uk

<http://www.assemblies.org.uk/>

Scripture union – Bible based assemblies

<http://www.biblebasedassemblies.com/>

Barnabas in schools

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/>

In:School – Equipping Churches and serving schools in and around Swindon

<http://in-school.co.uk>

Using other resources

It is great to be able to share resources, especially if we are pushed for time with our planning, but never just pick up a resource and try to just run with it. Always take time to read it through properly and make any adjustments to make the assembly fit with you and your personality as the presenter and also the school you are presenting to.

Written by Abi Corry, Lead project worker, in:School, Swindon